

Note of Meeting 29 November 2012

Title: Economy & Transport Board
Date and time: 29 November 2012, 11.00am
Venue: Local Government House

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Political Group	Council
Chairman	Peter Box CBE	Labour	Wakefield MDC
Deputy Chair	Roger Symonds	Liberal Democrat	Bath and North East Somerset
Deputy Chair	Mike Haines	Independent	Teignbridge DC
Members	Martin Tett	Conservative	Buckinghamshire CC
	Philip Atkins	Conservative	Staffordshire
	Nick Clarke	Conservative	Cambridgeshire CC
	Ann Steward	Conservative	Norfolk CC
	Mike Whitby	Conservative	Birmingham City
	Gillian Brown	Conservative	Arun DC
	Heidi Allen	Conservative	St Albans City and DC
	Claire Kober	Labour	Haringey LB
	Joan Dixon	Labour	Derbyshire CC
	Tony Page	Labour	Reading Council
	Chris Roberts	Labour	Greenwich LB
	David Wood	Labour	Tyne & Wear ITA [Chair of ITA SIG]
	Colin Rosenstiel	Liberal Democrat	Cambridge City
	Peter Popple	Independent	Scarborough BC
Apologies			
Vice Chair	Tony Ball	Conservative	Basildon DC
	Andrew Carter	Conservative	Leeds City
	Barrie Grunewald	Labour	St Helens MBC
	Heather Kidd	Liberal Democrat	Shropshire Council

In attendance: Ian Hughes; Eamon Lally; Rachael Donaldson; Charles Loft; Thomas Coales; Kamal Panchal; Nick Porter; Virginia Ponton (LGA)

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
1	<p>Note of previous meeting</p> <p>The Board agreed the notes of the previous meeting.</p>	
2	<p>Oral update on Town Hall debates</p> <p>The Chair introduced new members to the Board and gave an update on the Local Growth Campaign's Town Hall Debates, which were going well. He said that much work is done in between Board meetings which should be reported to the Board. A written update from the Chair will be given at future Board meetings.</p> <p>Action Officers to add oral update from Chair as a standing item to future Board meetings.</p>	Virginia Ponton
3	<p>City Deals and Heseltine Report</p> <p>The Chair introduced Emma Squire, Head of Local Growth Strategy, BIS.</p> <p>Emma Squire outlined the current economic challenges as a shared agenda across local government and government departments. She welcomed the Board's <i>local leadership, local growth</i> document and was impressed by local government's work on growth, especially while the sector faces other challenges. She updated members on the Heseltine Review in advance of the budget report and said that wave 2 of City Deals would focus on one big idea.</p> <p>Members discussed the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • concern that local issues and relationships are more complex than 'one big idea' and that solutions will require several ideas. • all potential growth areas should be able to bid for a City Deal. There should be a focus on FEAs. • two-tier areas require a different approach. • there is marginalisation of some London boroughs which would benefit from deals. • the Heseltine Review challenges the silo mentality of government. Departments must work in a joined-up way. • the potential for local authorities to commission their own transport development schemes. • the appointment of senior government officials to LEPs rather than providing more funding. <p>Emma Squire said that it was too early for decisions on a wave 3 of City Deals but that the government is open to proposals. There is the possibility of creating wave 1.2, for example, to look deeper into the wave 1 cities. She recognised local capacity constraints but said that the government is providing more core funding for LEPs. On the big idea, she said this could be a theme rather than one idea. She thanked members for raising the issues and would get back to the Board on the comments. Emma Squire left the meeting.</p>	

Decision

Members agreed:

- the key lobbying points in the paper, with the inclusion of pressing for FE funding to be driven by the economy and locally required skill sets.
- To continue to press for deals for counties and other areas.
- to work on more detailed analysis of wave 1 and 2 City Deals to take to government.

Actions

- Emma Squire to respond further to the Board's comments.
- Officers to include a lobbying point to press FE funding to be driven by the economy and locally required skill sets.
- Officers to take on board members' comments to work on more detailed analysis of wave 1 and 2 City Deals to take to government.

**Ian Hughes &
Sarah Bull**

4 Transport update

Eamon Lally introduced the paper and welcomed in particular members' comments on the position statement on the national roads strategy.

The paper gave a view on a range of potential options available to the government, which could be influenced early by local government.

Members discussed:

- the need to emphasise the key message that the strategic road network links to and uses local road network. Transport must be integrated.
- local and national carbon reduction and the strategic road network.
- cycling as a growing mode of transport to consider.
- freight consolidation on roads in order to reduce the number of large lorries on local roads.
- a lack of focus on transport between the East and West of the country.
- the government gives local flexibility in some areas of transport but not necessarily in areas which would be helpful locally.
- solutions to congestion should require local decisions.
- local transport boards were seen as too complex.

On bus partnerships and BSOG, members were concerned about the complexity of the proposed formula grant and the implications of devolving BSOG on local quality contracts. They noted that bus fuel subsidy is key for local areas. There was concern about lack of funding for concessionary travel, especially around potential rural isolation as well as concern over reduced student concessionary travel and the implications of raising the participation age (RPA).

Members asked for detailed figures on elderly and disabled concessionary travel. There is scope for local authorities and bus operators to work together on an offer to benefit residents, including providing a more attractive offer to young people and the potential to consider taxis and school buses rather than unviable bus routes.

On streetworks, members emphasised the importance of the effects on business, the reputation of local authorities, and lack of efficiency of

streetworks as well as discussing the implications of any road charging.

Members questioned the invitations to the streetworks launch event as not all members had received invites.

Actions

- Officers to reflect the points made in discussing the roads strategy with DfT.
- Officers to seek information on concessionary travel figures.
- Officers to check invitations to the streetworks launch event and resend to members.

**Eamon Lally &
Charles Loft**

Items 6 and 7 were taken before item 5.

6 Growth and Infrastructure Bill

Tom Coales, Senior Public Affairs and Campaigns Adviser, LGA introduced the item.

Members discussed:

- alarm at the impact on local decisions.
- the need to continue to push the key message that the planning system is not a barrier to growth, rather it is lack of finance to developers and buyers. Approved planning permissions outweigh housing shortage figures.
- specifying in all LGA responses to government which tier of local government would be affected by proposals.
- pushing for the government to relax rules around local authorities creating local banks.
- aligning local government assets with the private sector and using land in partnership.
- lobbying for FSA rules to be relaxed to make it easier for local authorities to create local banks.

The Chair invited members to provide figures and good news stories for officers to include in the campaign.

Decisions

- Members supported the cross-party consensus which has been achieved at the LGA and supported the strong line the LGA is taking, although suggested a more diplomatic approach than the second reading key messages.
- Members agreed that the LGA campaign is heading in the right direction.
- Members agreed to take finance and local authority banks as an agenda item at the next Board meeting.

Actions

- Officers to collect further information on Cambridgeshire County Council's creation of a local bank.
- Officers to take on Board members' comments and feed into the LGA campaign.

**Ian Hughes
Tom Coales**

7 Appointments to outside bodies

Ian Hughes said that good work had been done by the Board to take the lead to reduce the number of outside bodies.

Decision

The Board noted the appointments to outside bodies.

5 Higher Education

The Chair introduced the item, saying said that Higher Education (HE) is keen to be engaged with local government and the Hidden Talents campaign.

He introduced Chris Hale, Deputy Director of Policy, Universities UK and Prof. John Coyne, Vice Chancellor, University of Derby.

Chris Hale thanked the Board for the invitation and saw an important link between the two sectors. He gave an overview of Universities UK's work to support growth by focussing on creating a skilled workforce, attracting investors and driving innovation. There is also a role for universities to be active locally and support local SMEs, social enterprises and social economic growth. On LEPs he said that good relationships are developing but that more can be done.

Prof. Coyne added that universities are important in providing skill sets, which if shaped locally, can add extra leverage. Universities also provide cultural and international links.

Members discussed:

- opportunities to develop skills for work in the growing energy sector.
- the importance of ensuring the right courses for the local area, which relationships with LEPs can drive.
- an appropriate visa system was required to attract inward investment and international interest.
- the importance of identifying local specialisms and employing good practice in a way which takes into account local differences.
- how to retain students or attract them back to local areas.
- the need for HE to create an integrated brand to promote abroad.
- universities can offer business solutions not only through providing graduates but by providing skills to other staff in local businesses.
- members were pleased to hear about engagement with local areas, LEPs and employers and asked how this can be driven across more areas.
- members asked whether HE has relationships with UKTI.

Prof. Coyne said that fulfilling employment opportunities are key for retaining young people in local areas and that there is a link to the role universities play in their local area by helping to create jobs and communities. Good investment and international engagement are also central to the allure of an area. He hoped to see a shift in universities becoming 'for' an area, rather than 'of' an area. He said that international students are positive for areas providing short-term economic and cultural advantages.

Chris Hale said that Universities UK work with UKTI who are supportive in forging links and giving advice. There is on-going activity to seek out and work with high quality partners internationally.

The Chair highlighted that the Town Hall debates and the *local leadership, local growth* paper have shown great enthusiasm for HE and local government to work together. He welcomed the joint LGA/HE Town Hall debate in March in Manchester.

The Chair thanked the speakers for a particularly interesting item and closed the meeting.

Decisions

- Officers to take account of the discussions to shape the Town Hall Debate on 22 March.

**Rachael
Donaldson**